



Hybrid Events 101

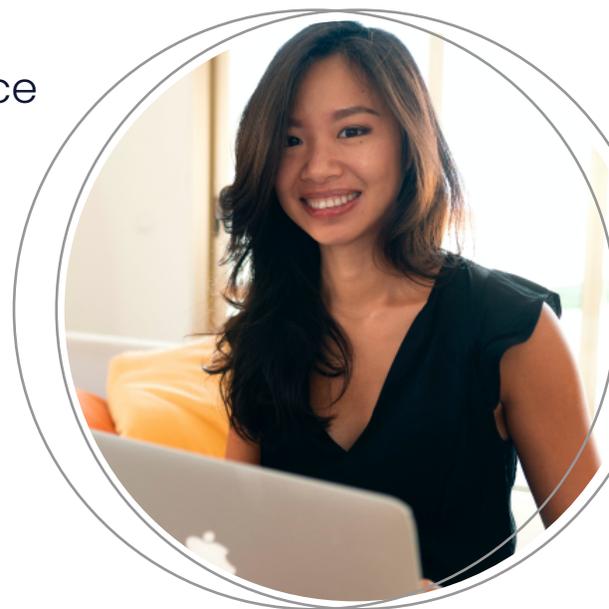
A complete playbook for producing hybrid events that drive revenue.

Produce Revenue Generating Hybrid Events

A recent Banzai survey found that **83% of marketing leaders** plan to incorporate hybrid events into their future event marketing strategy. With this year's dramatic shift in the event industry, it is hard to imagine that we will ever go back to purely in-person events.

Hybrid events are the future which means marketers and event planners need to plan and adapt to make sure their events meet the needs and expectations of their audience. In this playbook, Banzai breaks down the ins and outs of hybrid events and covers:

- What a hybrid event is (and what it isn't)
- Why hybrid events are the future
- How to produce a great hybrid experience



What is a Hybrid Event?

A hybrid event is an event that incorporates both virtual and in-person attendance options to attend an event live. Hybrid events are not new, but they are evolving. What used to be more of a live streaming experience now needs to be a layered, engaging experience for both your attendees who are participating online and those in the physical audience.

Qualities of a Hybrid Event

A hybrid event has a few core qualities including:

- Attendees have the option to view the event live both in-person and virtually.
- Attendees can participate in and engage with the event content both in-person and virtually.
- Attendees get access to sponsors and networking opportunities whether they are attending in-person or virtually.

What is not a Hybrid Event?

An event may have virtual components but not be a hybrid event. For example, an in-person event that records sessions to consume later, on-demand, is not a hybrid experience. Events with a mobile app and virtual engagement opportunities for in-person attendees only is not a hybrid experience.

But like all things, our definition of what makes up a hybrid event will change. It is up to marketers to innovate and adapt to create valuable experiences for their attendees wherever and however they are consuming/attending your event.

Event Terms

Other terms that will be helpful throughout this playbook include:

- **Virtual Event** - an online event where speakers, attendees, and sponsors consume content and participate in a virtual environment.
- **In-Person Event** - an event hosted at a physical location where participants experience the event live.
- **Live Streaming** - Streaming a broadcast in real-time so viewers can watch online from a variety of locations and devices.

Hybrid Events are the Future

Banzai's CEO **Joe Davy** likes to say that the last purely in-person event has already happened. While there still may be dinners and intimate in-person roundtable discussions, major events will have a virtual component moving forward. Hybrid events are the future of event marketing, offering new opportunities for generating awareness, building pipeline, and influencing revenue.

Reach New Audiences

Hosting an in-person event often means dealing with limitations. An event may be impacted by:

- Venue capacity
- Food and beverage budgets
- Location
- Your audience's ability to travel
- Ticket costs
- Major competing events
- Time of day

All of these and more can influence how many people you invite and whether or not they are able to attend.

By giving your attendees the opportunity to attend virtually, you are opening the (virtual) doors to an even wider audience. This expanded audience means getting your message and your product in front of more engaged prospects and customers. You are also getting a wider array of voices to ask questions and provide feedback that can help your business grow and improve.



Tips for Expanding Your Target Audience

- ✓ Testing a new persona? Invite them to attend virtually.
- ✓ Testing a new region? Invite them to attend virtually.
- ✓ Create tailored messaging for your audience that is likely to attend virtually.
- ✓ Offer discounted (or free!) tickets for those who want to attend virtually.

Generate New Sponsorship Opportunities

Not only does your hybrid event expand your audience, it can also expand your reach and your sponsorship opportunities. Hosting a hybrid event allows event producers to create new sponsorship and revenue opportunities that are not available at 100% virtual or 100% in-person events. For example, you can create a sponsorship prospectus that includes:

- Keynote Sponsor - Sponsor a keynote session
- Presenting Sponsor - Sponsor a speaking session
- Virtual Sponsor - Sponsor the entire virtual experience / virtual events platform
- Exhibit Sponsor - Have a booth on the floor of the networking pavilion
- Virtual Exhibit Sponsor - Have a booth on the floor of the virtual networking pavilion
- Mobile Event App Sponsor - Sponsor the mobile app experience
- Networking Sponsor - Host an in-person networking event
- Virtual Networking Sponsor - Host a virtual networking event

As with any great event sponsorship prospectus, you can include add-ons for additional cost that can include virtual and/or in-person specific additions.

Should I Sponsor a Hybrid Event?

"Just because all of the 3rd party events you used to go to for lead gen have gone virtual doesn't mean you should abandon them. I believe that you should consider virtual events as digital campaigns with benefits!

Getting your message in front of warm audiences is still the objective, so supporting 3rd party events with the objective of content distribution, gaining insights from target personas, and finding new connections remains a solid investment for your marketing portfolio. But just like in-person events, it's on you to activate that sponsorship correctly, so work with the event producers to align the experience with your objectives."

- Liz Lathan, CEO, Haute Dokimazo

Event Content Lives On

So much work goes into producing an in-person event. When it's over, it often feels like the shelf life of the content ends with the event. Hosting a hybrid event means that ideally, every session is recorded. That presentations along with the slides and any extra collateral can be shared online during the event and once the event is over. You can repurpose live event content into:

- On-demand, gated viewing experiences
- Blog posts / blog series
- PR
- Future webinars and virtual experiences
- White papers and reports from surveys, as well as feedback conducted throughout the live event
- Social (paid and organic)
- Sales collateral
- Community content
- Customer case studies
- Promoting future events

When done right, a major event can power your content pipeline for the next year or more.

When Do Hybrid Events Not Work?

There are a few event types where a hybrid experience may not be the best option. More intimate events such as CXO roundtables or an executive dinner (or meal of your choice) may be better as 100% in-person so your guests feel comfortable sharing and participating knowing their conversation is not being recorded or viewed by unknown participants. It also guarantees participants will not have to deal with distractions that often come up when attending an event virtually.

What if No One Wants to Attend In-Person Events?

As great as it is to have the option to attend virtually, nothing replaces the ability to attend in-person. A day (or more) away from the office where individuals can focus on networking, growing in their career, and learning from their peers and industry experts will always be valuable.



Amy Morgan
@amymorgangp

...

I...just want to go to a real conference with bad coffee & pastries & get some pens & a tote bag instead of logging into another webinar.

9:40 AM · Oct 16, 2020 · Twitter for iPhone

Tweet from @amymorgangp

In-person events will not go away, but they may begin to look different. Planning for what used to be a thousand+ attendee user conference may need to be retooled, but if marketers are known for one thing, it is the ability to innovate and thrive.

Steps for Producing a Great Hybrid Event

With hybrid events set to take center stage in 2021, it is essential that event marketers don't let the virtual aspect of events become an afterthought. The virtual experience needs to be more than just a live video stream. Both your in-person and virtual attendees want the opportunity to engage with the event content and participate with their fellow attendees. Building a successful hybrid event means creating intentional virtual and in-person experiences that bring value to every attendee.



Hybrid Event Technology - Everything You Need

The idea of producing a hybrid event can be intimidating. For purely virtual events, marketers need to rely on a strong virtual events platform, a dependable wireless connection, and good A/V. For in-person events, marketers must focus on making sure their speakers are in the room and ready to go, the microphones work, the slides transition, and the sponsors are happy. With hybrid events, marketers need to think about all of this and more!

Like any event, the amount of **resources and technology** you need to produce a great hybrid experience depends on the size of your event. Smaller events can get away with good internet connection, a reliable camera and microphone, and someone to manage the virtual experience. For larger events, marketers may need a large production team, multiple cameras, and intricate A/V technology to create a seamless experience.

Here is a checklist of the basic tech needed to produce a hybrid event:

- ☑ **Virtual Event Platform** – Look for a platform that can support the virtual experience with live streaming, screen sharing, audience engagement, and content distribution.

Learn how Banzai Virtual can support your upcoming hybrid events.

- ☑ **Internet Connection** – When streaming content a strong internet connection is a must! Always connect to a hardline when possible. If you are hosting a large hybrid event, look into securing your own internet connection that is dedicated to the virtual experience.

- ☑ **Video & Audio Equipment** – For hybrid events, your computer camera and microphone are just not going to cut it. There **are a lot of great options** depending on the budget and size of your event. Poor audio and video quality can really hurt an attendee's experience, potentially causing them to leave early and provide negative feedback. Invest what you can to create an experience worth sticking around for.

- ☑ **Encoder** – A **video encoder** compresses your video files in order to preserve the quality of your video. You have the option to use a hardware encoder or a software encoder. For more information, here is a **great beginners guide** to why encoders matter for your streaming experience.

- ☑ **Mobile Event App** – Consider a mobile event app that both your virtual and in-person attendees can use to access content, ask questions, learn about your sponsors and partners, and more. A mobile event app will help your attendees network and interact from wherever they are attending.

Check out [Event Manager Blog](#) for a full breakdown on the technology needed for successfully live streaming an in-person event.

Roles and Responsibilities

Producing a hybrid event may mean expanding your in-person event team to include support for the virtual component of your event. An on-site event crew may include:

- **Event Manager** - Manages the event from start to finish. They own the budget and are the go-to point of contact for all aspects of your event.
- **Virtual Event Manager** - This person supports the virtual attendee experience. They are your virtual event platform expert. They set up the experience pre-event, manage the content, Q&A, and chat during the event, and distribute all the sessions on-demand post-event.
- **Technical Producer / Director** - The Technical Producer and/or Director manages the camera and audio crew. They call the shots--including what cameras and screens to switch to (for multi-camera events). They and their team can support any technical issues that may come up.
- **Camera and Audio Crew** - Whether you are hosting a major user conference, or a 50 person workshop, it is great to have someone in charge of the audio and video equipment. They can troubleshoot when needed and manage the A/V challenges that always seem to pop up.

The roles and responsibilities of every hybrid event will look different depending on your budget and event format. It is important to be clear about who is responsible for what and to always have a **contingency plan**.



Start Planning Your Next Hybrid Event

A lot of us may be stuck in the virtual world for the foreseeable future, but that does not mean you shouldn't begin thinking about your hybrid event strategy now. Creating a hybrid plan will enable you to budget and secure the resources you need to launch your hybrid event as soon as we are all given the green light. Though hybrid events are not new, they are the future of event planning and will play a pivotal role in how we plan and experience events moving forward.

About Banzai

Banzai believes in the power of connection through shared experiences. Our vision is to connect millions of people to educational professional experiences – to learn, grow, and find new opportunities.

Banzai is a leading enterprise SaaS provider of Event Marketing solutions for virtual and in-person events. Banzai is used by over 100 companies like Adobe, Dell Technologies, Nextiva, and Pure Storage. Banzai supports the unique needs of marketers, growing their event audiences and creating more engaging event experiences.

